

St. Catherine Creek
National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 217
Sibley, Mississippi 39165
601/442 6696
<http://www.fws.gov/saintcatherinerecreek>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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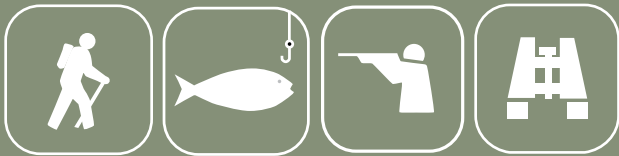


To:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

St. Catherine Creek

National Wildlife Refuge Regulations 2012-2013



The Refuge

St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established in 1990 to provide important wintering habitat for migratory birds. Management of the refuge aims to conserve the integrity of a dynamic bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. The 24,589 acre refuge located in southwest Mississippi contains a diverse array of habitat types consisting of bottomland hardwoods, cypress swamps, upland hardwoods on loess bluffs, in addition to moist soil impoundments, reforested areas, fallow fields and accreted land. Flooding from the Mississippi River occurs from winter through early summer preserving a naturally functioning bottomland hardwoods system and a bountiful diversity of wildlife and plant species.

The geographic location of the refuge has an integral role in the National Wildlife Refuge System by maintaining critical habitat for waterfowl along the Mississippi Flyway. Management of the refuge ensures protection of these habitats for wetland-dependent species, threatened and endangered species, neotropical migratory birds, and abundant resident wildlife such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and various small game. Visitors to the refuge can partake in activities that benefit the conservation of fish and wildlife resources including: wildlife observation, wildlife photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation. The refuge contains several areas that are open year round for the enjoyment of the public. However, public hunting and fishing is only permitted on the refuge during specific times of the year.

General Regulations

Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by refuge officers. To ensure your safety and enjoyment while visiting St. Catherine Creek NWR, please take the time to become familiar with the refuge regulations.

Hunting and fishing regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting and fishing is permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations. State rules regulating hunting and fishing will be applicable to all game species on the refuge unless otherwise listed in this brochure.

Required Permits

A \$15.00 Annual Public Use Permit is required for all hunters and fishermen. Senior citizens (age set forth by

state regulations) and youth permits (ages 10-15) are free of charge but required. Permits must be signed and in your possession while hunting or fishing, and this acknowledges your understanding of refuge regulations. In addition to your refuge permit, you must carry all applicable state licenses (including primitive weapons license when deer hunting) and a picture ID at all times while on refuge property. Refuge permits authorize participation in all refuge hunting and fishing, except for lottery turkey hunts when an additional notification is required. Contact refuge headquarters for more information.

Permits are available at refuge headquarters Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 4 pm or by mail, payable with cash or money order only. If you are requesting a permit by mail, send a \$15.00 money order payable to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with your full name, address, and telephone number to St. Catherine Creek NWR, PO Box 217, Sibley MS 39165. Permits are non-transferable and non-refundable. **The Refuge Manager may revoke any Annual Public Use Permit for refuge violations.**

Special Use Permits

Because of strict requirements concerning Public Use on National Wildlife Refuges, all commercial and certain other activities such as research, require special permission. Depending on the type of activity, a permit fee may be assessed. Applications are available on the refuge website or at the refuge office. Allow up to 30 days for processing.

General Access

All visitors must obtain and complete a Daily Visitor Use Reporting Card upon entering the refuge and display it on the dash so that name and address are visible from the outside. Before leaving the refuge, users must complete the reverse side of the card and deposit it in a drop box at one of the visitor kiosk stations. All game (including feral hogs) and fish taken must be reported on the Daily Visitor Use Reporting Card.

The refuge is open to public access during daylight hours only except during hunting season, when you may enter at 4 am and must leave by two hours after sunset. Fishermen may enter the refuge ½ hour before sunrise and must exit no later than ½ hour after sunset. The Refuge Manager may close the refuge at their discretion due to inclement weather, road conditions, or excessive flooding. NOTE: There is an active Bald Eagle nest in the Gilliard Lake area and in the Cottonmouth Unit. All precautions must be taken NOT to disturb nesting eagles or their nest. Fishermen should take all precautions NOT to disturb the wading bird colony in Gilliard Lake.

Access to private property through the refuge is only permitted by a Special Use Permit.

Vehicles

All motor vehicles are restricted to roads designated on the map. Refuge roads and trails may be closed at times due to flooding or adverse weather conditions. Driving on flooded roads is prohibited. All travel on refuge roads is at your own risk. Parking is restricted to parking areas and immediately adjacent to roadways designated on the map. Do not block any roads, gates or road entrances. No parking is allowed in the refuge headquarters parking lot, shop area parking lot, or between” No Parking” signs adjacent to refuge houses while hunting. Bicycles are allowed year round, except on Magnolia Hiking Trail. Horses and mules are not allowed.

All Terrain Vehicles

The use of all terrain vehicles (ATV or UTV) are only allowed on designated ATV trails during refuge hunts and scouting periods. Hunters must be 16 years of age or older to operate an ATV on the refuge. ATVs and UTVs must not exceed 25 mph when driven on the refuge. ATV’s may only be used by hunters during designated refuge hunting and scouting seasons. Use of an ATV to travel off a designated trail is strictly prohibited.

Boats

Hunters may not enter the refuge from public waterways. Boat access for hunters will be restricted by high water as determined by refuge manager.

On the Sibley Unit, motorized boats are only allowed in Gilliard Lake, south of the Ring Levee (see map). Electric motors can be used in Swamp Lake except during high water. Swamp Lake is closed to all boats November 15 - March 1. All U.S. Coast Guard and state boating regulations apply including, but not limited to, running lights, registration, and personal flotation devices.

Prohibited Activities

- Littering
- Operating a vehicle or ATV/UTV on a flooded road or trail
- Operating an ATV/UTV off of a designated trail
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles or ATV/UTVs
- Use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Entering refuge from private property
- Hunters entering from public waterways
- Use of deer decoys
- Use of trail cameras

- Unconfined pets
- Camping or overnight parking
- Campfires
- Unauthorized take of wildlife or plants or parts thereof (including cutting trees or brush)
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts
- Target practice
- Baiting, possession of bait, or hunting over bait
- The use of dogs to trail wounded deer or hogs
- Discharge of a firearm, except when hunting
- Man drives for game, including feral hogs
- Hunting within 100 yards of any refuge building
- Hunting within 150 feet of any designated road or ATV trail
- Use or possession of any type of material used as flagging or trail markers, except bright eyes or reflective tape
- Inserting a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree, or hunting from any tree in which such an object has been placed
- Use or possession of climbing spurs or spikes
- Field dressing game or hogs within 150 feet of any road, ATV trail, or parking lot
- Possession of saws, saw blades, hatchets, and/or machetes
- Trapping
- Riding horses or mules
- Crawfishing or frogging
- Spotlighting – artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife
- Parking or hunting within 150 feet of any active oil well site, production facility, or equipment
- Tampering with any petroleum facility or equipment
- Possession of any type of shot other than approved non-toxic shot
- Use or possession of any drug or device for employing such drug for hunting
- Commercial fishing including possession of trot lines, limb lines, jug lines, can lines, slat traps, hoop nets and yo-yo’s
- Geocaching
- Taking of alligator gar
- Operating a vehicle, motorcycle, ATV/UTV or bicycle on Magnolia Hiking Trail.

Hunting Regulations

Hunter access

Hunters may enter the refuge no earlier than 4 am and must exit the refuge no later than 2 hours after legal sunset. Raccoon and opossum hunters may access the refuge at night during the month of February. Hunting is only allowed in designated areas during dates listed on this brochure.

Bag limits

The refuge observes state harvest regulations unless otherwise specified in the season restrictions portion of this brochure. Please thoroughly read this brochure to determine appropriate refuge hunting season dates and allowable refuge harvest regulations. Hunters must leave the hunt area and proceed to the nearest deer check station once they have harvested a deer.

Shooting Hours

Shooting hours during all hunting seasons are one-half hour before legal sunrise to one-half hour after legal sunset (excluding waterfowl hunting when hunting must cease at noon).

Check Stations

All deer harvested on the refuge must be checked at the nearest deer check station identified on the map of this brochure. All harvest information must be recorded on daily use reporting cards and the cards deposited in the drop box at a visitor kiosk station. All deer harvest information must also be recorded on jawbone tags located at the check stations, attached to the jawbone and placed in the designated basket. Harvest information gathered from these cards is critical for management of wildlife resources on the refuge.

Hunter Orange Requirements

All hunters are required to wear a hunter orange cap and 400 square inches of hunter orange garments during the primitive weapon season, state youth gun hunt and while hunting small game in open fields or reforestation areas to protect their safety. Hunter orange garments must be unbroken and worn on the outermost layer of clothing at all times while hunting on the refuge.

Hunters who use backpacks or carry deer stands on their backs should display additional hunter orange over their equipment for personal safety. Hunters hunting from concealed ground blinds must display a minimum of 400 square inches of hunter orange above or around their blind that is visible from all sides and wear hunter orange while in the blind. Waterfowl hunters are not required to wear hunter orange.

Hunters Safety Certification Requirements

Hunters 10-15 years of age must possess proof of passing a state-approved Hunter Education Course to hunt or apply for special lottery hunts on the refuge. An adult 21 years of age or older must accompany all hunters under 16 years of age. Adults must remain within plain sight or normal voice contact distance when accompanying youth during hunts. Adults must have a refuge permit to supervise youth that are hunting. Only one youth may be supervised by one adult during deer and turkey hunts. Two youths may be supervised by one adult during small game hunts and migratory bird hunts.

Disabled and Physically Challenged Hunters

Special access hunting blinds are available to accommodate permanently wheelchair bound hunters. Wheelchair dependent hunters are required to pre-register at the refuge headquarters prior to hunting the designated blinds.

Hunting Blinds or Stands

Only portable deer stands may be used on the refuge. Inserting metal objects into trees or hunting from trees into which metal objects have been inserted is prohibited. Climbing spurs are prohibited. Blinds and tripods must be dismantled and stands must be removed from the tree after each day’s hunt. Deer stands (including tripods) may be placed in a non-hunting position one week prior to the opening of archery season. All stands must be removed from the refuge prior to any flood event or by February 5, NO EXCEPTIONS. **Deer stands must have each hunter’s full name, permit number, address, and phone number clearly printed on the stand.** Any stand left on the refuge past February 5 will be confiscated and disposed of.

Hunters hunting from concealed ground blinds (excluding waterfowl hunters) must meet refuge hunter orange requirements (listed above). Only temporary blinds are allowed for waterfowl hunting. Blinds and decoys used for waterfowl hunting must be removed daily by 1 pm. The use of old structures/camps for hunting is prohibited.

Hunting with Dogs

Hunting with dogs for migratory birds is permitted during migratory bird seasons. Dogs are only allowed to locate, point, flush, and retrieve migratory game birds. Hunting with dogs is also permitted during specific dates during the rabbit, raccoon, and squirrel seasons listed in this brochure. All dogs must be collared and labeled with owner’s name and phone number. Hunting any wildlife other than migratory birds, squirrel, rabbit, and raccoon with dogs is prohibited. Use of dogs to trail wounded deer is not allowed.